

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, in view of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-88 were originally presented for consideration in this application. Claims 6, 7, 12, 13, 19, 37-45, 58-69 and 80 are presently withdrawn from consideration as being drawn to a non-elected species. No claims have been added or canceled. Accordingly, claims 1-88 are currently pending in this application.

The examiner's indication that claims 9 and 18 contain allowable subject matter is noted with appreciation.

The following rejections and objections were set forth in the Office Action:

1. Claims 1-5, 8, 10, 11, 14-17, 20-36, 46-57, 70-79 and 81-88 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,766,853 to Restarick et al.; and
2. Claims 9 and 18 are objected to for depending from a rejected base claim, but are otherwise indicated as being allowable.

Regarding the anticipation rejections, please note that the independent claims 1, 11, 46 and 70 have been amended above to make it clear that a connection is made between the connectors after the connectors are positioned in a well. Restarick does describe connections between fiber optic connectors in a tubular string, and these connectors do remain connected to each other when the tubular string is later installed in a well. However, Restarick assembles the tubular string with the fiber connectors connected to each other at the surface.

In contrast, the present invention provides a way to make such connections between the connectors after the connectors are positioned in a well. Each of independent claims 1, 11, 46 and 70 has been amended above to recite that the connection between the connectors is made after the connectors are positioned in a well. Claim 32 recites that the first and second fiber optic connectors are aligned in the well, and then the connectors are operatively connected in the well. Claim 83 recites a step of operatively connecting first and second fiber optic lines while the lines are in the well.

Thus, Restarick cannot anticipate any of the independent claims 1, 11, 32, 46, 70 and 83, since Restarick makes the connection between connectors at the surface before the connectors are positioned in the well. Therefore, the examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejections of independent claims 1, 11, 32, 46, 70 and 83, and of the claims dependent therefrom.

Due to the allowability of the claims discussed above, the examiner is respectfully requested to consider in this application the claims which were previously restricted out of this application and which are dependent from allowable claims. In addition, the examiner is respectfully requested to consider in this application the remaining non-elected claims, since they are clearly allowable over the art of record.

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, all of the claims pending in this application are now seen to be in a condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance of claims 1-88 is therefore earnestly solicited.

The examiner is hereby requested to telephone the undersigned attorney of record at (972) 516-0030 if such would expedite the prosecution of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

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